County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

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Chief Deputy Director

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July 19, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

LATINO FAMILY INSTITUTE, INC. FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Latino Family Institute, Inc. Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in November 2015. The FFA has one office located in the First Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "maintaining families; therefore, whenever possible, we use community and extended family resources to maintain or re-unify children with birth family members who are willing and capable of raising and providing permanent homes for their children. When reunification is determined to not be in the best interest of the child, we will have a pool of families available to adopt these children."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In April 2016, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 areas; therefore, the FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR
KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Maria Quintanilla, Executive Director, Latino Family Institute, Inc. FFA
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

LATINO FAMILY INSTITUTE, INC. FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Latino Family Institute, Inc. Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in November 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, two Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), three FFA staff members and three certified foster parents.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 29 DCFS placed children in 12 certified foster homes. The focus children's average number of placements was one, their overall average length of placement was six months and their average age was six. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	6 - Optimal Status	The focus children have optimal permanency. The focus children have achieved legal permanency and/or live in a family setting which the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and all team members have evidence will endure lifelong.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	6 - Optimal Stability	The focus children have optimal stability in placement settings and enjoy positive and enduring relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters and peers. There is no history of instability over the past 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	6 - Optimal Maintenance of Visitation and Connections	Fully effective connections are being excellently maintained for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	6 - Optimal Teamwork	The team contains all of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed an excellent, consistent working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	6	6	6

In the area of Safety, the FFA continues to score at the optimal level for their provision of services and stability to placed children. The focus children reported that their certified foster parents make them feel safe and welcomed in their homes. The focus children reported that they feel at home with their certified foster parents. During the Quality Assurance Reviewer's visits to the certified foster homes, the Reviewer noted that the focus children felt safe and comfortable with and around their certified foster parents. The FFA Social Workers reported conducting weekly visits to the focus children's certified foster homes to assess their safety. The FFA Social Workers and certified foster parents attend monthly safety training. The FFA has also developed an internal tool to identify safety concerns. Due to the training provided and the tool utilized, the FFA has not had any special incidents or investigations in the last 30 days regarding the placed children's safety. Additionally, the focus children are interviewed privately by the FFA Social Workers regarding safety concerns.

The FFA demonstrated increased performance in the areas of Permanency, Placement Stability, and Visitation. The FFA is providing optimal permanency for the focus children, ensuring the best permanent plan for the focus children is developed. The permanent plan for all three focus children is Family Reunification (FR). However, one focus child is in the process of being adopted by her certified foster parents. The second focus child was reunified with his grandparents during the QAR review. The third focus child's certified foster

parents are pursuing for Legal Guardianship. The FFA provides placement stability for the focus children by ensuring the best placement match is made during intake with a certified foster parent to best meet the focus children's needs and the ultimate goal is always adoption if FR is not successful. One certified foster parent stated that the FFA staff has been "fantastic" in their services and making sure that the focus child is comfortable in her home. The certified foster parent also stated that part of the success in placement stability has to do with knowing the focus child's history, which was provided to her before coordinating placement. The focus children have not experienced any placement disruptions since being placed with the FFA and they enjoy a positive relationship with their certified foster parents. The FFA and the certified foster parents have demonstrated being extremely supportive of maintaining family connections and flexibility in arranging visitation. The focus children are encouraged to visit and maintain telephone contact with their family members and with key people in their lives. For one focus child, her certified foster parent provides transportation and monitor visits with her biological father. For the second focus child, the FFA and the certified foster parents supported the focus child's permanency plan of FR by facilitating visits with the focus child's grandmother. As a result of the certified foster parents' assistance with visitation, the focus child was reunified with his grandmother.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the FFA in April 2015 and noted an opportunity for improvement in the focus area of Teamwork. In August 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in this area. Based on the information below, it appears that the FFA showed improvement in the area of Teamwork on their 2015-2016 QAR.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	4	5
2015-2016 Scores	5	5	5	6	5

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA continues to make good efforts to provide good and substantial services to the placed children. The FFA is engaging the focus children, their family members/NREFMs, their certified foster parents and the DCFS CSWs. Specifically, the FFA Social Workers maintain constant communication with the children's family members, the DCFS CSWs and the service providers to obtain input to ensure decisions made on behalf of the focus children are best suited for them individually. The communication with the DCFS CSWs, the certified foster parents and the service providers is conducted via e-mails, telephone and progress reports to keep them abreast of the focus children's progress. The focus children reported they have a good relationship with their certified foster parents, the

FFA Social Workers, and their DCFS CSWs. The FFA Social Workers are the liaison between the DCFS CSWs, the focus children's family members, the focus children and the focus children's certified foster parents to arrange meetings to develop the focus children's Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) and/or to modify the focus children's goals. The FFA Social Workers meet as frequently as twice a month with the DCFS CSWs in the focus children's certified foster homes to "discuss issues that arise regarding the focus child" as per a statement made by a DCFS CSW. The children are provided with services such as individual therapy, Wraparound services, and tutoring. The NSPs match the services being provided to the focus children. The focus children are provided with an array of extracurricular activities of their choice. Two focus children are provided with counseling and tutoring. One of these two focus children participates in basketball, gymnastics and dance. The third focus child is only four-years-old and is too young to participate in extracurricular activities. The FFA's team conducts weekly case reviews to monitor and assess the focus children's progress toward achieving their NSP goals. The certified foster parents track the children's behavior at home so any issues are identified and adjustments can be made in a timely manner. One FFA Social Worker stated: "we are there to help the families". The FFA Social Workers maintain contact with the DCFS CSWs and service providers via e-mail and telephone, as well as written reports. The FFA Social Workers and their supervisor meet weekly to review the focus children's status in regards to their progress or concerns. Based on these weekly meetings, monthly updates are provided to the DCFS CSWs. The DCFS CSWs reported that they receive NSPs on a quarterly basis and are called and e-mailed regularly by the FFA Social Workers to provide updates.

In the area of Teamwork, the OHCMD found that the FFA implemented their 2014-2015 QIP and scored at the optimal level. The FFA was to ensure that all team meetings were to include all team members, including the certified foster parents and placed children's family members/NREFMs. The FFA now ensures that frequent communication with the DCFS CSWs, the focus children's family members and the certified foster parents is occurring. The FFA developed a template that is emailed to team members prior to developing the placed children's NSPs. The FFA Social Workers facilitate meetings with all the focus children's key parties when the DCFS CSWs schedule their monthly visits to the focus children's certified foster homes. At times, the meeting may take place twice a week, depending on availability of the team members. Child and Family Team meetings are also scheduled as needed and all key parties are contacted for their participation. The focus child, who was reunified with his grandmother, was an active participant along with his biological parents.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In January 2016, the OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Education and Workforce Readiness and Health and Medical Needs. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that children are enrolled in school within three days of placement and that children are provided with initial dental examinations within 30 days of the date of placement.

In April 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 areas; therefore the FFA was not require to submit a QIP.